



X

Master's thesis
Licentiate's thesis
Doctor's thesis

Subject	Information Systems Science	Date	23.05.2008
Author(s)	Ari Helin	Student number	
		Number of pages	87
Title	Customer support in the Internet		
Supervisor(s)	Dr.Sc. Jussi Puhakainen		

Abstract

The Internet has opened a new channel for customer service. This channel is offering 24/7 possibilities to get support and any information that customers want. This new channel offers great possibilities also for companies. The Internet is a cost efficient way to deliver support and general information to a large number of people. However, the basic information sharing is not good enough anymore. Customers are asking more for updated information, new type of interactive services and real problem solving content. Nice animations and moving pictures are not providing that type of customer service, which will increase customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and retention.

The target for the study was to get better understanding on the customer support in the Internet. What are the latest trends in the field of customer service and what are customers' expectations regarding customer support. The online quantitative survey focused to a company's current online support. In this environment, the target was to clarify the reasons, why customers were coming to the support site, who they were and what did they expect to receive. And finally the target was to understand, how well customers valued the online support, the company is providing.

The theoretical part of the study gave a good understanding, how the online environment has been evolving. People from all over the world are using the Internet very actively and the number of people is growing every day. Men and women are using the Internet quite equally and on all continents. Even though there are already various interactive support applications available, they are not used much. Customers are still using quite traditional online applications like email, FAQs, contact information and store locators.

This online survey gave a good understanding about the current status of the company's online support. Totally, 1160 respondents from 113 countries gave their opinions. Respondents were mainly men in the age groups 20 to 39 who are visiting the site quite occasionally. However, there are also a group of customers, who are visiting the support site on a weekly basis. These customers are also very satisfied with the company's online support offering and they are telling that the company's online support builds their loyalty towards the company.

However, as a summary it can be said that online customer support cannot be the only support channel that any company should provide to its customers. A good online support together with other support channels creates a winning formula for customer service.

Key words	Internet, WWW, customer service, customer support
Further information	